പിന്നെ ടി. ബി. കൊ ധാരാളമുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അവിടെ കുറെ ആളുകൾക്കു് ജോലിയുണ്ടാകുമെന്നുള്ളതു് വേറെ കാര്യം.

മിസ്റ്റർ സി. വി. ഇയ്യു: സർ, എനിക്കു് ഇതിനു മറുപടി പറയുവാനുള്ളതു് ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ താമസിക്കുന്നില്ലെന്നു കരുതി ടി. ബി. കൊ വേണ്ടെന്നു പറയുന്നതു് ഒരിക്കലും ശരിയല്ലെന്നാണു്. സാധാരണ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ ഊണും ഉറക്കവും കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടു് സക്കൂട്ടു് ചെയ്യുവാൻ പോയാൽ വൈകുന്നേരം ഉണ്ണാൻകാലത്തു മടങ്ങിയെത്തും. ചില ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ കാപ്പി കഴിഞ്ഞു അതികാലത്തെ പുറപ്പെട്ടു ജോലിയും കഴിച്ചു് മടങ്ങിയെത്തും. അപൂർവ്വം ചില വലിയ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ, ചീഫ് സിക്രട്ടറി ദിവാൻപേഷ്കാരായിരുന്നപ്പോഴും, ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ ദിവാൻപേഷ്കാരുമായതുകൊണ്ടായിരിക്കും ൧൰൦ ൫൰൦ ദിവസം ചില വില്ലേജുകളിൽ ക്യാമ്പുചെയ്യാവുള്ളതു്. ചിലപ്പോൾ പോലീസ്സു് കമ്മീഷണർ വന്നു് രണ്ടും മൂന്നും ദിവസം കുന്ദംകുളത്തു താമസിച്ചിരുന്നു. അതു് പണി എടുക്കുവാൻ വേണ്ടിയിട്ടായിരിക്കും. ഇങ്ങിനെ ക്യാമ്പു ചെയ്യുന്നതായാൽ ജോലിക്കു വിഘ്നം കൂടാതേയും, ജോലി നന്നായിട്ടും, സൌകര്യമായിട്ടും നടത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുപോകാൻ സാധിക്കുമെന്നുള്ളതിനു പുറമെ, വില്ലേജുകളിലുള്ളവരുടെ ആവശ്യങ്ങളും ആവലാതികളും നേരിട്ടറിയുന്നതിനും, അതിനു വേണ്ട പരിഹാരമുണ്ടാക്കുന്നതിനും സാധിക്കുന്നതാണു്. ആ തത്വത്തെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയാണു് പഴഞ്ഞിയിലും, മറ്റത്തീല്യും ടി. ബി. വേണമെന്നു ഞാൻ പറയുന്നതു്. ഈ തത്വം ഗവൺമെണ്ടു അംഗീകരിക്കണം. എന്നുതന്നെയല്ല, ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ വിസിറിനു പോയാൽ അതാതു ടി. ബി. കളിൽ താമസിച്ചുകൊള്ളണമെന്നു് നിബ്ബന്ധിക്കുകയും വേണം. നമ്മുടെ വലിയ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ ഏറണാകുളത്തും തൃശ്ശിവപേരൂരും മാത്രം താമസിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നാൽ വില്ലേജുകളിലെ പരിതസ്ഥിതികളും മനസ്സിലാക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കുകയില്ല. ഈ റസലൂഷൻ ഞാനിവിടെ പ്രസ്സുചെയ്യണമെന്നു വിചാരിക്കുന്നില്ല. ഇതിന്റെ തത്വം ഗവൺമെണ്ടു സ്വീകരിക്കണമെന്നേ എനിക്കു് ഉദ്ദേശമുള്ളു. ഇതും പറഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടു് ഞാൻ ഈ പ്രമേയം പിൻവലിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

Resolution by leave withdrawn

RESOLUTION No. 38

Introduction of a Bill providing for an instalmental scheme of payments of the debts

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* Sir, The resolution which I commend for the acceptence of the House is:"*This Council recommends to the Government to introduce a bill providing for an instalmental scheme of payment of the debts of the agriculturists spreading over a period of at least 15 years.*"

It is unnecessary for me to make a lengthy speech in support of this motion. The problem of indebtedness has been the subject-matter of discussion in this House several times. Several aspects of the problem has been threshed out on the floor of this House and considered by this House and the Treasury Bench. The immediate provocation for me to send this resolution was the calamitous cyclone

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practically impoverishing the people of the State. It was a great relief to the people of Cochin to find that soon after the cyclone there was a Proclamation issued by His Highness granting a temporary moratorium. As a matter of fact it was our expectation that by the time the period of the Proclamation comes to an end there will be some suitable legislation introduced in this House with a view to see that people really realise the benefits of the Proclamation. A moratorium granted for a short time cannot bring any benefit to the people except to invite suits and execution in an accumulated form. It only serves the purpose of temporarily suspending legal remedies for a period by which time it should be succeeded by a legislation. It was a great disappointment to find that this expectation was not fulfilled in that on the termination of the moratorium old conditions were revived. When the Cochin Agriculturists' Relief Bill was introduced in this House, it was as a matter of fact passed on the point of bayonet. The difficulty for this House was to choose between a complete denial on the part of the Government to reintroduce that Bill for the third reading of the Bill in case the amendments which this House considered to be proper were to be pressed, or to receive it with as many amendments as possible and leave it to the good grace of the Government so that at least a partial relief might be granted to the people. It was our hope then that even after the passing of the Cochin Agriculturists' Bill there will be occasion for this House to introduce amendments to that Bill and to complete that programme of relief of indebtedness in course of time. As a matter of fact when the Bill came for the third reading, among the many speeches of congratulation that came from the non-official side of the House, there were observations made by the Party Leaders in this House that they are congratulating the Government on the distinct understanding that very soon the Government will rectify the shortcomings of the Act by introducing suitable amendments to the Act. On the contrary our expectations failed in that not only the Government did not introduce any amendment at all to that Bill but also even suitable amendments introduced by the non-official members of this House have been opposed by the Government with the result that our hopes have been frustrated. Sir, the Cochin Agricultursits' Relief Act was passed here before the Travancore Agriculturists' Relief Bill was introduced. The Travancore Agriculturists' Relief Bill itself is modelled on the Bombay Debt Relief Act and as a matter of fact when the Cochin Agriculturists' Bill went through the Select Committee and in the considerations in this House the provisions of the Bombay Act were not scrutinised and considered. In fact, I even believe that if the provisions of the Bombay Act were considered by all the members and the

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Government most probably the Cochin Agriculturists' Relief Bill would have taken an entirely different form. It was soon after the passing of the Cochin Agriculturists' Relief Bill that we found that the provisions of the Bombay Act were more or less as such drafted in the Travancore Agriculturists' Relief Bill with an additional provision of granting instalment provision for debts. The Travancore Debt Relief Act allows a period of nine years for the payment of the debt. In case the debt is paid in a shorter interval, then the Act allows a proportionate reduction. The maximum period under the Travancore Agriculturists' Relief Act, is 9 years. It was suggested by the then Diwan of Cochin when this proposal was laid before him that it will be a great calamity to the State if all suits were to be stayed and no litigation was permitted for the realisation of the debts. The Travancore Agriculturists' Relief Bill again is an improvement on this difficulty inasmuch as it does not prevent the institution of suits but after the institution of the suits debts could be realised only according to the instalment provision; so that if the judgment-debtor has paid a proportionate amount of the debt at a particular instalment, the decree cannot be executed and will have to wait for the period of instalment granted by the Bill. I think that our Government will not consider the Travancore Government to be a radical government. Neighbouring States must have as far as possible legislations which correspond with each other and as far as possible the difficulties experienced by the people of Cochin as they are similar to the difficulties of the people of Travancore in this respect, should be remedied almost in the same manner if possible. I hope that our Government will give its most sympathetic consideration to the proposal contained in this resolution and I commend it for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon *(Chittur-Rural):* I second it.

Mr. A. Madhava Prabhu *(Diwan Peishkar):* Sir, Government have to oppose this resolution. The analogy of the Travancore Bill and the appeal to the Cochin Government to be more liberal than the Travancore Government, both of them, are not things which could be compared with each other for reasons which are too well known. * * * * * *

At least $\frac{1}{8}$ they get at once and if the persons want to get the benefit of that Act they have to pay the balance in such and such instalments. That is one difference between the Travancore Bill and the Cochin Bill. I say that these States ought not to be compared in many respects so far as such matters are concerned.

Another thing is this. The Travancore Act has nothing to do with Agriculturists. *Pattam* and *michavaram* are excluded from that Act. It is a Debt Relief Act. Here it is an Agriculturists'

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Debt Relief Act. It refers to the agriculturists. There is that difference. It is therefore not proper to compare these Acts which cannot be compared in many respects.

So far as our State is concerned our Bill was passed in 1114. It dealt with the ordinary agricultural debt first, then it dealt with *michavaram* and then it dealt with *pattam*. So far as the debts are concerned, it scaled down the debt—of course, it did not scale down the principal but only interest—and said that a certain portion of the interest will be wiped off, and then so far as the balance is concerned there will be a reduction in the rate of interest. Those who wanted to get the benefits of the Act were given one year's time to pay the scaled-down debt the first instalment to be paid within the first six months and the balance within the next six months. That portion of the Act is completely worked out. If any debtors were really aggrieved, *i.e.*, if the majority of the debtors of the State who are to get the benefits of the Act were aggrieved, we would have found some movement in that behalf, not after the cyclone came on the 13th of Edavam 1116 but soon after 1115 was over. That means the majority of the people who were benefited by that Act did take advantage of that and there was no cry saying that the time allowed was insufficient and that they could not get the benefit of the Act on that account. What is it that has happened after 1115? It is the cyclone. The cyclone is very much relied upon as the thing which has crushed the power of the people to raise funds. Well, there was a time *i.e.*, as soon as the cyclone came over us, when we all felt that we were practically crushed under the effects of the cyclone. I am one who has travelled practically through almost every village and watched the effects of the cyclone so far as the agricultural produce of the land is concerned. For the purpose of my address to this House on this point, I propose to divide the the whole population into—those who have been owning paddy lands and those who have been owning gardens. So far as those who had been owning paddy lands are concerned, you can never say that anybody has suffered in the Cochin-Kanayannur Taluk, except in two or three villages, on account of this cyclone. When we go to Mukundapuram, except on the boarders of the Karuvannur river they have not suffered much. In Trichur so far as paddy lands are concerned the *viruppu* crop was not much affected. If there had been any damage in the *viruppu* crop, that has been more than compensated by the *mundakan* crop. In the Talappalli Taluk near the Bharatha Puzha, they have been very seriously affected. If anybody need cry it is the people of that portion of the Taluk who should cry and they certainly deserve the greatest sympathy. In Chittur they have not been affected. On the other

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hand, I have heard from persons owning paddy lands in Mukundapuram, *i.e.*, in Irinjalakkuda and suburbs, that this year the *viruppu* crop which used to yield "x" fold has yielded 1½ times "x" and even twice "x". So far as the Cochin-Kanayannur Taluk is concerned, except for two or three villages in several places it has been a far better crop. That is what is seen with reference to the quantity of yield.

Then what about prices? There is no comparison between the prices of paddy which prevailed before the cyclone and those that have come to prevail after the cyclone. Whether it is due to profiteering attempts on the part of the merchants or otherwise, the result is that the price of paddy both here and outside has gone up. As a result, the owners of paddy have been able to realise more than double the price. Therefore, both from the point of view of the quantity that has been obtained from the fields and from the point of view of the prices attainable, the owners of paddy lands cannot say that they have been badly hit. There may be, as I said, stray instances here and there in which persons have really suffered. But that is no reason for a general legislation of this type.

Coming now to the arecanut and the cocoanut plantations, as I have said on other occasions, so far as cocoanut gardens are concerned those areas lying this side of Edavanakkad on the West Coast have not suffered to any appreciable extent. Edavanakkad and the places on the other side including Cranganur, have suffered to a large extent. Some portions of the Trichur Taluk on the eastern side of Conoli canal have suffered and in other places they have not suffered. I have said on other occasions that the Government are doing all that they can in the way of remission of tax. I have conducted and am sitll conducting certain investigations as regards the quantity of the yield and the prices that these people have been able to get during the course of the last nine months from Edavam 1116 till the end of Makaram. I found that in those places which have been most seriously affected the income is 76 per cent in some areas and 80 per cent in others. In Cranganur the loss is somewhere about ¼th in some cases. In the eastern portion of the Cranganur Taluk there has not been any appreciable loss. In Azhikode, Eriyad and Methala there has been some loss.

The one kind of tree which has suffered most and which used to bring in something more is the arecanut tree. So far as arecanut is concerned in some taluks you will find in certain areas more than 50 per cent of the trees have gone in one compound while in the next compound only about 1/10th has gone. On the whole we cannot say everybody has been badly hit. No doubt the largest percentage of trees which have been destroyed are the arecanut trees. But there

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I have found by looking into the accounts of persons who have had occasion to sell arecanut during the previous years and this year that the prices which were near about Rs. 7—8—0 in 1115 and 1116 rose slowly to Rs. 22—8—0 this year.

Mr. K. Kochukunhan Kaimal *(Vadakkancheri)*: Even up to Rs. 35.

Mr. A. Madhava Prabhu *(Diwnn Peishkar)*: If it is Rs. 35 it is better for my argument. Therefore, balancing the loss in the quantity by the increase in the prices you will find that the calamity is not so big as was first imagined. Further even that damage is not evenly spread in all the Taluks. In the Cochin-Kanayannur Taluk, except probably in Vellarappilly, there is very little of arecanut plantations. There is some arecanut plantation in the south-western side of Talappalli. But there also the destruction is not so great as in some parts of Mukundapuram and Trichur. The parts most affected are the whole of Trichur Taluk and the northern portion of the Mukundapuram Taluk. The southern portion of Mukundapuram from Chalakkudi this side is not affected to any appreciable extent. Therefore, we find that the picture that we imagined soon after the cyclone was over or the impression we were labouring under for some time after the cyclone, has certainly been changed. The present impression is certainly different. These are the effects of the cyclone which is the one thing that has intervened after the lapse of the period given by the Act to the debtors to pay their debts, *i.e.*, the end of 1115 and today. The plight of the people can be very well imagined from that picture which I have drawn, if that picture is accepted as correct. All men have not been universally affected. I know, so far as Palluruthi is concerned, even two or three per cent of the trees has not fallen and the deficiency in the income is nothing worth mentioning. The small deficiency in income is a thing which we have been experiencing almost every year on account of the fall or rise in the price of cocoanut and cocoanut oil. There is nothing very extraordinary. Therefore, my humble submission to the House is this. Has anything which would justify an interference with the laws which were brought into existence in those days really taken place? No. The ground that has been given, *i.e.*, the devastation on account of the cyclone, is therefore rather an exaggerated account of the damage done. That is one aspect of the question which I wish to place before the House. There is however another aspect and that is this.

So far as certain sections of the people *viz.*, the tenants are concerned, some sort of relief was however necessary. The reason for

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that relief that was necessary was this. Though they were able to realise as much as and even more than what they ought to have realised in the first and second crops they had to spend something more to cultivate the first crop or to raise the second crop. They had to spend a little more than what they would have to do in normal times. Therefore, Government thought that though they got a pretty good yield a good portion of it must have been eaten up by the extraordinary expenditure they had to incur in cultivating these crops. Therefore, the Government thought that those tenants—persons who are actually in possession of the properties and not mere *pattadars* or *jenmies*—would certainly be at a disadvantage. For that reason the Government said that the instalment of *pattam* or *michavaram* which they have to pay this year need not be paid this year. It may be paid next year and next year's instalment the year after it. That was the only thing which the Government thought they need do in view of the actual state of affairs, and that, the Government did even before this House made any requisition to the Government. You will find from what this Government has done ever since the cyclone that this Government has been very solicitous of the prosperity of the agriculturists, and it has been trying to do as much as it thought was actually necessary for the succour of the agriculturists. Now, what is it that this resolution says? The payment of the debts which were payable on the last day of Karkadagam 1115 or on the last day of Makaram 1115 should be made payable in another 15 years. Here we have to consider another aspect of the question which I would place before this House for its consideration. I do not know whether many of the members here remember what actually took place after the last war. The war was over, I think, about the year 1919. In 1921, you will remember, that there was an upheaval in the economic conditions of this land, India. The number of joint-stock companies that was floated in the year 1921—22 was very large and even then everyone of those joint-stock companies was over subscribed in a few days if not hours. It did not take more than one or two days to have them all over-subscribed. That was the condition of the money market in those days. What would be the condition of the money market soon after this war ends, which must end sooner or later? 15 years is a long period. It is not possible to imagine what would be the condition of the ecnomic world when this war comes to an end. If our past is any indication of what it would be, the indication is in our favour. I am placing this fact before you just to consider whether such Bills which will stay the hands of the creditors for such a long time as that are really advisable at this stage. There are many more things to be said on this. Opinions

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may not all be uniform in matters of this type. In some quarters sentiment may also play to some extent. The Government side and the non-official side, between these two, there is always the difference in mentality. I may not be taken to be sincere when I say that I am not speaking as a member of the Government and that I am speaking as one who has seen the whole State and who has got some experience of the past. Whatever that may be, I place these considerations before you. For these and for many other reasons I urge that this resolution may not be pressed at this stage. We have got another Bill brought by Mr. Iyyu. Here the period is 15. He has asked for a period of 20 years, I think. Probably that Bill will come during the next session of the Council.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi)*: Sir, after listening to the advocacy of the Diwan Peishkar I thought I must advice Mr. Devassy not only to withdraw his resolution but to bring a Bill to repeal the Agriculturists' Relief Act. The Diwan Peishkar has certainly overdone the case.

Panel Chairman: Mr. Moothedan, without interrupting, as the House is so very thin if the House is agreed I have no objection to adjourn the House.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur)*: Sir, there is no purpose in continuing the business of the House in this manner. I think it is better to adjourn.

Panel Chairman: So you are for adjournment?

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur)*: Yes.

Panel Chairman: The House is adjourned to 9-30 a.m. on Monday.

The House rose for the day at 4-5 p.m.

C. J. MATHEW
Secretary to the Council

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